

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method for expanding customer bases for data services providers, comprising the steps of:

connecting a first end-user of a first data services provider to a high-speed network operated by a third party and dedicated to broadband data transport services using a common provisioning system of the third party, the high-speed network being at least one of a hybrid fiber optic coaxial network and an all-fiber optic network;

connecting a second end-user of a second data services provider to the high-speed network using the common provisioning system;

connecting the first end-user to a headend of the first data services provider through a common data center of the high-speed network; and

connecting the second end-user to a headend of the second data services provider through the common data center of the high-speed network;

generating a first bill for the first data services provider by the common data center based on the first end-user's usage of the high-speed network; and

generating a second bill for the second data services provider by the common data center based on the second end-user's usage of the high-speed network, wherein

~~the high-speed network is owned by a~~ the third party; ~~is not the first data services provider and not the second data services provider, and~~

the first data services provider and the second data services provider each being a customer of the third party.

Claim 2 (Original). The method of Claim 1, wherein the first end-user is geographically located outside of a peripheral reach of a communications plant operated by the first data services provider, the communications plant being at least one of a hybrid fiber optic coaxial network and an all-fiber optic network.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of Claim 1, wherein the headend of the first data services provider is a headend for at least one of CATV signals and data.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of Claim 2, wherein:
the communications plant operated by the first data services provider carry CATV signals; and
the peripheral reach of the communications plant is restricted by a governmental regulatory authority.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of Claim 4, wherein the communications plant carries CATV signals to other end-users, but not the first end-user.

Claim 6 (Original): The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
storing a first end-user entry in a database of the common data center corresponding to the first end-user;
associating the first end-user entry with the first data services provider in the database;
storing a second end-user entry in the database of the common data center corresponding to the second end-user; and

associating the second end-user entry with the second data services provider in the database.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A method for supplementing subscribership for data services of a service provider that provides at least one of CATV services and data services in first geographic area, comprising the steps of:

obtaining by a third party a contract from the service provider to provide data services for an end-user, the end-user located outside of the first geographic area;

provisioning the end-user for data services using a common provisioning system of the third party;

storing an end-user entry in a database of the third party corresponding to the end-user;

associating the end-user entry with the service provider in the database; ~~and~~

connecting the end-user to a communication line operated by the service provider via a high speed data network of the third party, and

generating a bill for the service provider by the third party based on the end-user's usage of the high speed data network.

Claim 8 (Original): The method of Claim 7, wherein the communications line operated by the service provider is connected to a headend through which at least one of CATV signals and data signals are transmitted.

Claim 9 (Original): The method of Claim 8, wherein a peripheral reach of the communications line which carries the CATV signals is restricted by a governmental regulatory authority.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A method for expanding customer bases for data services providers, comprising the steps of:

executing a subscription contract between a third party and a first data service provider to connect a first end-user to a high-speed network dedicated to broadband data transport services operated by the third party;

executing another subscription contract between the third party and a second data service provider to connect a second end-user to the high-speed network;

connecting the first end-user to a headend of the first data service provider through a common data center of the high-speed network using a common provisioning system of the third party; and

connecting the second end-user to a headend of the second data service provider through the common data center of the high-speed network using the common provisioning system of the third party;

generating a first bill for the first data service provider by the third party based on the first end-user's usage of the high speed network; and

generating a second bill for the second data service provider by the third party based on the second end-user's usage of the high speed network.

Claim 11 (Original): The method of Claim 10, wherein at least one of the first data service provider and the second data service provider also provide cable television signals to communication lines connected to their respective headends.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A method for reusing computer resources to provide operations support services to a plurality of Internet service providers with different customer bases, comprising the steps of:

populating a digital repository of a third party with entries including information about end-users of a first Internet service provider;

populating the digital repository with entries including information about end-users of a second Internet service provider, the second Internet service provider being different from the first Internet service provider;

provisioning end-users of the first Internet service provider and end-users of the second Internet service provider using a common provisioning system operated by the third party;

presenting a graphical user interface maintained by the third party to the first Internet service provider when seeking to at least one of access, create, and update the information about end-users of the first Internet service provider; and

presenting the graphical user interface to the second Internet service provider when seeking to at least one of access, create, and update the information about end-users of the second Internet service provider.

Claim 13 (Original): The method of Claim 12, further comprising the step of:

providing from the first Internet service provider cable television service to other end-users, but not to the end-users of the first Internet service provider.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): A method for promoting competition between cable providers offering broadband data services, comprising steps of:

connecting an end-user to a high-speed data network dedicated to broadband data transport services operated by a third party;

connecting a headend of a first broadband data services provider to the high-speed data network so as to create a physical communication link between the end user and the headend of the first broadband data services provider;

connecting a headend of a second broadband data service provider to the high speed data network so as to create another physical communication link between the end user and the headend of the second broadband data services provider; and

determining if the end-user selects to subscribe to data services offered by one of the first broadband data services provider and the data services offered by the second broadband data services provider;

enabling the physical communication link between the end-user and the first broadband data services provider if in the determining step it is determined that the end-user selects the data services of the first broadband data services provider; and

enabling the physical communication link between the end-user and the second broadband data services provider if in the determining step it is determined that the end-user selects the data services of the second broadband data services provider;

generating a bill for the first broadband data services provider by the third party based on the end-user's usage of the high speed network if the physical communication link between the end-user and the first broadband data services provider is enabled; and

generating a bill for the second broadband data services provider by the third party based on the end-user's usage of the high speed network if the physical communication link between the end-user and the second broadband data services provider is enabled.

Claim 15 (Original): The method of Claim 14, wherein the high-speed data network does not carry cable television signals.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A system for expanding customer bases for broadband data services providers, comprising:

means for connecting a first end-user of a first data services provider to a high-speed network operated by a third party and dedicated to broadband data transport services using a common provisioning system of the third party, the high-speed network being at least one of a hybrid fiber optic coaxial network and an all-fiber optic network;

means for connecting a second end-user of a second data services provider to the high-speed network using the common provisioning system;

means for connecting the first end-user to a headend of the first data services provider through a common data center of the high-speed network; ~~and~~

means for connecting the second end-user to a headend of the second data services provider through the common data center of the high-speed network;

means for generating a first bill for the first data services provider by the common data center based on the first end-user's usage of the high-speed network; and

means for generating a second bill for the second data services provider by the common data center based on the second end-user's usage of the high-speed network,
wherein

~~the high-speed network is owned by a~~ the third party; ~~is not the first data services provider and not the second data services provider, and~~

the first data services provider and the second data services provider each being a customer of the third party.

Claim 17 (Original): The system of Claim 16, wherein the first end-user is geographically located outside of a peripheral reach of a communications plant operated by the first data services provider, the communications plant being at least one of a hybrid fiber optic coaxial network and an all-fiber optic network.

Claim 18 (Original): The system of Claim 17, wherein the headend of the first data services provider is a headend for at least one of CATV signals and data signals.

Claim 19 (Original): The system of Claim 16, further comprising:
means for storing a first end-user entry in a database of the common data center corresponding to the first end-user;
means for associating the first end-user entry with the first data services provider in the database;
means for storing a second end-user entry in the database of the common data center corresponding to the second end-user; and
means for associating the second end-user entry with the second data services provider in the database.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A system for supplementing subscribership for data services of a service provider that provides CATV and data services in first geographic area, comprising:

means for providing data services via a third party for an end-user from the service provider, the end-user located outside of the first geographic area;

means for provisioning the end-user for data services using a common provisioning means of the third party;

means for storing an end-user entry in a database of the third party corresponding to the end-user;

means for associating the end-user entry with the service provider in the database; ~~and~~

means for connecting the end-user to a communication line operated by the service provider by a high speed data network of the third party, and

means for generating a bill for the service provider by the third party based on the end-user's usage of the high speed data network.

Claim 21 (Original): The system of Claim 20, wherein the communications line operated by the service provider is connected to a headend through which at least one of data signals and CATV signals are transmitted.

Claim 22 (Original): The system of Claim 21, wherein
a peripheral reach of the communications line which carries the CATV signals is restricted by a governmental regulatory authority.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): A system for reusing computer resources to provide operations support services to a plurality of Internet service providers with different customer bases, comprising:

means for populating a digital repository of a third party with entries regarding information about end users of a first Internet service provider;

means for populating the digital repository with entries including information about end-users of a second Internet service provider, the second Internet service provider being different from the first Internet service provider;

means for provisioning end-users of the first Internet service provider and end-users of the second Internet service provider using a common provisioning system operated by the third party;

means for presenting a graphical user interface maintained by the third party to the first Internet service provider when seeking to at least one of access, create, and update the information about end-users of the first Internet service provider; and

means for presenting the graphical user interface to the second Internet service provider when seeking to at least one of access, create, and update the information about end-users of the second Internet service provider.

Claim 24 (Original): The system of Claim 23, further comprising:

means for providing from the first Internet service provider cable television service to other end-users, but not to the end-users of the first Internet service provider.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A system for promoting competition between cable providers offering broadband data services, comprising:

means for connecting an end-user to a high-speed data network dedicated to broadband data transport services operated by a third party;

means for connecting a headend of a first broadband data services provider to the high-speed data network so as to create a physical communication link between the end-user and the headend of the first broadband data services provider;

means for connecting a headend of a second broadband data service provider to the high-speed data network so as to create another physical communication link between the end-user and the headend of the second broadband data services provider; and

means for determining if the end-user selects to subscribe to data services offered by one of the first broadband data services provider and the data services offered by the second broadband data services provider; ~~and~~

means for enabling the physical communication link between the end-user and the first broadband data services provider if the means for determining determines that the end-user selects the data services of the first broadband data services provider; ~~and~~

means for enabling the physical communication link between the end-user and the second broadband data services provider if the means for determining determines that the end-user selects the data services of the second broadband data services provider

means for generating a bill for the first broadband data services provider by the third party based on the end-user's usage of the high speed network if the physical communication link between the end-user and the first broadband data services provider is enabled; and

means for generating a bill for the second broadband data services provider by the third party based on the end-user's usage of the high speed network if the physical communication link between the end-user and the second broadband data services provider is enabled.

Claim 26 (Original): The system of Claim 25, wherein the high-speed data network does not carry cable television signals.